

## *How the Penguins Saved Veronica* by Hazel Prior ~ Discussion Questions

1. What are your thoughts about Veronica when you first meet her? How does your opinion change?
2. What issues does Veronica have with Patrick when she first meets him? What issues does Patrick have with Veronica? Are they right in their assumptions? Do you think their judgments are typical of the way the older and younger generations view each other?
3. There are many types of caring in the story. What are they, and which do you think is most important?
4. Veronica does not cry. How has this suppression of feelings affected her life? Is it ever good to hide how you feel?
5. Do you agree with Veronica's observation, "If you are interested in something these days, you simply go ahead and do it. Such opportunities didn't exist when I was young. Not for women anyway."
6. Having lived through the war, Veronica believes a monster is lurking in all of us and that a smile can hide a villain. Do you think this is an unfair judgement of her life experience or the truth?
7. The diary sections set in wartime Britain highlight a different lifestyle and values from those we have in the twenty-first century. Which aspects are better and which are worse now?
8. Were you surprised to learn about the freedom prisoners of war had and babies taken from their mothers without consent?
9. In what ways is Veronica manipulative? In what ways does she also expect others to be manipulative? Is this a forgivable trait?
10. Which character do you most admire? Did your opinion of other the characters change?
11. Have you ever found it easier to talk to an animal/bird than to a human? What is the role of Pip the Penguin? Veronica is willing to take the penguins for all that they are but not people. Why do you think this is?
12. Terry says: "Human intervention has harmed wildlife beyond belief." Do you believe it is right to let nature take its course or should people intervene where we can?
13. What do you think Veronica learned from the penguins?
14. Veronica's will stipulates that funds from her estate have to save one penguin a year. What inclusion would you put in your will if you had the same funds as Veronica?